

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 27805 01 OF 02 242005Z

73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-05

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R 241953Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4591

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 27805

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, FR, UR, CI

SUBJECT: SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE

1. SUMMARY: WEEKLY PRESS STORY ABOUT SOVIET ARMS SALES
TO CHILE THROUGH A BULGARIAN FIRM ELICITS WRATH FROM
IZVESTIA AND THIS LEADS TO DIGGING OF MORE FACTS
CORROBORATING ORIGINAL STORY AND ASSURING REPETITION
OF THE REPORT FOR THREE WEEKS. STORY COMES AT TIME
WHEN USSR IMAGE IN FRANCE IS SOMEWHAT TARNISHED. END
SUMMARY.

2. THE SATIRICAL AND LEFT-LEANING "LE CANARD ENCHAINE"
REPORTED IN ITS 15 OCT ISSUE THAT SOVIET ARMS AND
SPECIFICALLY T-54 TANKS HAVE BEEN SOLD RECENTLY
TO CHILE. NOT LATER THAN THE FOLLOWING MORNING
(16 OCT) "IZVESTIA" LASHED OUT AT LE CANARD WHICH IT
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PAGE 02 PARIS 27805 01 OF 02 242005Z

SAID CARRIED A "REPUGNANT SMELL OF PUTRIFICATION" BY

REPORTING THAT THE USSR HAD AGREED TO SUCH SALES
TO CHILE'S MILITARY REGIME. SPEED OF SOVIET RE-
SPONSE SUGGESTS NOT ONLY PROMPT REPORTING TO MOSCOW
OF LE CANARD'S ARTICLE BUT ALSO HIGH DEGREE OF
SENSITIVITY.

3. THE 16 AUGUST ISSUE OF LE MONDE PICKED UP THE
CANARD STORY AND THE IZVESTIA RESPONSE AND COMMENTED
THAT THIS WAS ONE MORE INSTANCE WHERE "THE SOVIETS
WISHED FRENCH AUTHORITIES WOULD INTERVENE TO PREVENT
THE PUBLICATION OF STORIES WHICH THE USSR DOES NOT
LIKE. NOTHING IN A WAY OF EXPLANATION WILL EVER
CONVINCE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, WROTE LE MONDE,
THAT WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN MOSCOW IS INCONCEIVABLE IN
PARIS."

4. THE 22 OCT ISSUE OF LE CANARD NOT ONLY CONFIRMED
THE ARMS SALES STORY BUT ADDED MORE DETAILS, I.E.,
THAT THE SALE WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE BULGARIAN
KANTEX FIRM WHICH ARRANGED THE SHIPPING FROM THE
YUGOSLAVIA PORT OF RIJEKA OF A CONSIGNMENT OF T-54
TANKS WITH MUNITIONS AND SPARE PARTS. "WHAT IS ALL
THIS VIRTUOUS INDIGNATION (ON THE PART OF THE USSR)?"
ASKED THE WEEKLY. "WOULD THEY WANT US TO BELIEVE
THAT CONTRARY TO THE U.S. FRANCE AND BRITAIN -- WHOSE
ARMS SALES LE CANARD HAS OFTEN DENOUNCED. THE
SOVIET UNION FOR ITS PART IS ALWAYS SCRUPULOUS IN ITS
PUBLIC OR CLANDESTINE CHOICE OF CLIENTS. FOR THOSE
WHO MIGHT BE ASTONISHED, LET US RECALL THAT THE
CZECHOSLOVAK OMNIPOL FIRM SOLD WEAPONS TO BOTH SIDES
DURING THE BIAFRA WAR...AS WELL AS LIGHT WEAPONS
TO THE PORTUGUESE DICTATOR CAETANO DURING HIS
COLONIAL WARS. MORE RECENTLY THE EXTREME RIGHTISTS
OF THE LEBANESE PHALANGE PURCHASED WEAPONS FROM THE
BULGARIANS...AND EACH TIME THE SOVIET UNION WAS
CONSULTED."

5. THE NEXT STEP IN THE UNFOLDING SAGA OF LE CANARD
STORY IS A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF THE SOVIET
INFORMATION BUREAU IN PARIS PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE
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PAGE 03 PARIS 27805 01 OF 02 242005Z

OF 24 OCT WHICH REFERS TO LE CANARD ARTICLE AS A
FALSE STORY AND ATTEMPTS TO ARGUE THAT WHAT LE MONDE
CONSIDERS AS "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS ACTUALLY LICENSE
TO DEFAME THE SOVIET UNION."

6. A CANARD SOURCE TOLD US THAT THE EDITORS AND STAFF
ARE DELIGHTED BY THE SOVIET REACTION, BECAUSE WITHOUT
IT THE STORY WOULD HAVE DIED DOWN AND WOULD NOT EVEN

HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY LE MONDE. SOURCE POINTED OUT ALSO THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROTEST AND PUTRIFICATION SMELL, NEITHER THE IZVESTIA NOR THE INFORMATION CHIEF IN PARIS HAVE EVER STATED FLATLY THAT THERE WERE NO SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE. LE CANARD DOES NOT INTEND TO DROP THE STORY, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THE FIGHT WITH A SOVIET NEWSPAPER HAS PROVIDED AN INCENTIVE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE INFORMATION

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PAGE 01 PARIS 27805 02 OF 02 242002Z

73

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 27805

ON THE SUBJECT TO COME FORTH TO SUPPORT CANARD'S CASE AGAINST THE SOVIETS. NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE WILL CONTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OMNIPOL'S ACTIVITIES.

7. SOURCE PROVIDED US ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARD-

ING THE BULGARIAN FIRM WHOSE CORRECT NAME IS KINTEX
INSTEAD OF KANTEX AS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED IN THE
MAGAZINE. IT IS LOCATED ON BLVD. ANTON IVANOFF IN
SOFIA AND ITS PRESIDENT'S NAME IS NAIDENOFF. THE
BRAINS BEHIND THE COMPANY, HOWEVER, IS A MAN BY THE
NAME OF BATIEFF, WHO IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN BEIRUT
LAST SPRING AND WAS REPORTED TO HAVE VISITED LEBANON
ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SINCE THEN. SOURCE BELIEVES
THAT KINTEX IS AN IMPORTANT SUPPLIER OF ARMS TO THE
PHALANGE IN LEBANON.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 27805 02 OF 02 242002Z

8. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF CANARD'S ALLEGATIONS, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE SOVIETS WERE WELL ADVISED IN CHALLENGING LE CANARD THEREBY CALLING EVEN MORE ATTENTION TO THE STORY, LET ALONE ASSURING ITS PROLONGATION. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE SINCE STORY BROKE AT A TIME WHEN USSR IMAGE IS SUFFERING NOT ONLY FROM THE HANDLING OF GISCARD'S VISIT IN MOSCOW BUT ALSO FROM WHAT THE FRENCH PERCEIVE AS EVIDENCE THAT THE USSR IS PREPARING TO DRAG ITS FEET WITH REGARD TO CSCE IMPLEMENTATION.

9. OF INTEREST ALSO IS THE FACT THAT LE CANARD CAN COUNT ON INFORMATION WHICH IS BEING VOLUNTEERED BY READERS WHO WERE SPURRED BY IZVESTIA'S "PUTRIFICATION SMELL."

10. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO THAT ADDRESSEES MAY

PICK UP.

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